



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information
Press Service

WASHINGTON, D. C.



Release - Immediate

December 10, 1934.

BIOLOGICAL SURVEY TO ADMINISTER
WICHITA FOREST GAME PRESERVE

On July 1, 1935 the administration of the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve will come under the supervision of the Chief of the Biological Survey in order to provide a laboratory within which there may be wild-life research under field conditions, according to mutual agreement which, already approved by the Secretary, was announced today by the Biological Survey and the Forest Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Located in south-central Oklahoma, approximately 12 miles north of Cache, this 61,000 acre tract was first established as a national forest by President McKinley in 1901, and was made a National Game Preserve in June, 1905, by President Theodore Roosevelt. Since that time, its resources have been developed under Forest Service administration. To perpetuate the foundation stock of the western range-livestock business, and as a memorial to the late Senator John B. Kendrick of Wyoming, sponsor of the enterprise, a herd of ninety nine longhorn cattle has been developed from 27 head purchased in 1927. More than 200,000 recreationists, who use the area each year, have watched the growth of a buffalo herd which now numbers more than 300 head, of an elk herd which has increased to more than 325 head, of deer which, under protection, have reached some 450 head, and of wild turkeys which have multiplied from a few head to more than a thousand.

1165-35

It is this wild life development, - integrated with management of range and other resources, - which has helped make the Wichita area so valuable as a wild-life field laboratory. Here the Biological Survey will have opportunity to continue and amplify its wild-life research under natural conditions; to add to its knowledge, gained over many years, of the life and feeding habits, diseases and parasites, of big game; to work out and apply methods for determining the carrying capacities of game ranges and for eliminating damage done to those ranges by rodents and erosion.

The predatory animals, such as the coyote, will not be neglected. Their role in maintaining proper numbers and health conditions among game animals, their destructiveness to game and livestock, and the extent to which they may be considered as carriers of parasites and diseases have been studied, but there is need for further exploration and research. Additional knowledge will be obtained as to the relationships between fur-bearers and other forms of wild life, their breeding and feeding habits, and the numbers and species to which a given area is adapted.

Decision to make this change in administration of the Wichita preserve was reached in an effort to find the best use which could be made of this valuable and interesting area. Under its new management, the personnel with whom the public has become acquainted will be continued so far as practical, and the chief difference in administration will be in the main objective, - research work, - to which the Wichita area will now be devoted by the Biological Survey.